

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding HQT¹

What is HQT?

On January 8, 2002, the federal government enacted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA). One of the provisions of this law requires that all K-12 teachers of core academic areas in public schools meet Highly Qualified Teacher requirements (i.e. “be HQT”) for their assignments. States must report annually to the federal government the percentage of core academic area classes in the state that are taught by Highly Qualified Teachers.

NCLBA defines core academic areas as English language arts (including English as a Second Language), math, science, social studies, reading, foreign languages, art, music, and the generalist endorsement areas of elementary education and early childhood education (grades K-3 only). In addition, special educators become subject to HQT content knowledge requirements when they provide primary instruction in a core academic area. For a complete list of endorsements subject to HQT content knowledge requirements, including endorsements reviewed under certain circumstances, see the document *HQT Review Areas by Endorsement Code* online at education.vermont.gov under Educator Licensing.

HQT requirements pertain exclusively to licensure and content knowledge. They do not evaluate or reflect pedagogical skills/knowledge. HQT reviews follow federal guidelines and are completely separate from the state licensing process.

How do I know if I am HQT for my core academic area endorsement(s)?

When a core academic area endorsement is issued by the Licensing Office, an HQT review is automatically conducted. You should receive an HQT determination letter within approximately 30 days of your endorsement being issued. When you receive your HQT determination letter, please provide your supervisor with a copy. If at any time you need another copy of your HQT determination letter, call (802) 828-1455 or email DOE-HQT@state.vt.us.

In addition, there are some endorsements that are reviewed for HQT under certain circumstances, including:

1. Educators with alternative program assignments,
2. Educators with supplemental reading and/or math assignments, and
3. Speech Language Pathologists who provide primary instruction.

In these instances, HQT reviews are conducted upon request or when the educator is reported as having one of these assignments in the Educator Census.

Additional information about HQT licensure and content knowledge requirements for endorsements and assignments can be found online at education.vermont.gov under Educator Licensing.

What is the difference between being HQT for my endorsement(s) and being HQT for my assignment(s)?

¹ Highly Qualified Teacher

There are two components that must be met in order to be deemed HQT for an assignment.

The first is that you must have a valid Level I, Level II, provisional, teaching intern, or retired license (an emergency license is not eligible for HQT status) and have the appropriate endorsement for your assignment. The content and instructional levels of your endorsement must both match the assignment. For example, a holder of a secondary (grades 7-12) math endorsement who teaches 6th, 7th, and 8th grade math classes would not be considered appropriately endorsed for the 6th grade portion of his/her assignment.

The second component of being HQT for an assignment is that you must have the required content knowledge for the endorsement you are using in that assignment. Your HQT determination letter states whether or not you have met the HQT content knowledge requirements for the core academic area endorsement(s) you hold.

If both the licensure and content knowledge components of HQT are satisfied for your assignment, then you are HQT for that assignment. If either or both is not met, then you are not HQT for your assignment.

Additional information about HQT licensure and content knowledge requirements for endorsements and assignments can be found online at education.vermont.gov under Educator Licensing.

Does HQT affect my licensure status?

No. HQT and state licensure are separate processes. Even if you are not HQT, you will still maintain your educator license as long as you fulfill the state relicensure requirements.

How long do I have to meet HQT requirements?

There is no grace period to reach HQT status. You should work in good faith to become HQT for any endorsements under which you are teaching. Principals should work in good faith to give their educators assignments that match their endorsements.

What is the consequence of not being HQT for my assignment?

All K-12 public schools are subject to the following:

1. ALL core academic area teachers, including long-term substitutes², who are not HQT for their assignment must have a plan in place through their Local Education Agency (LEA) to become highly qualified. The state monitors the LEA's progress towards 100% HQT status on an annual basis. Please note: All educators paid with Title II, Part A CSR funds must be HQT for their assignments; plans to become HQT are not sufficient.
2. Every year, each LEA must publicly report HQT data for core academic area assignments from the previous school year. This reporting includes the percentage of core academic area classes that were taught by teachers who were not HQT for their assignments, the

² Long-term substitutes are teaching substitutes who are employed in the same position for 30 or more consecutive calendar days. Long-term substitutes must have at least a provisional license (an emergency license is not eligible for HQT status).

percentage of teachers that were teaching under emergency licenses, and the professional qualifications of its teachers.

Additional consequences for schoolwide and targeted-assistance Title I schools include:

3. Federal law stipulates that Title I Schools may ONLY hire educators for core academic area positions who will be HQT for their anticipated assignments.

In addition, Title I schools may not continue to assign educators to core academic area positions for which they are not HQT if Title I funds support the position. In schoolwide programs, all positions are considered to be Title I funded.

4. Each school receiving Title I funds must inform all parents at the beginning of each school year of their right to request information on the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers (i.e., licenses held, degrees earned, including paraprofessional qualifications, if applicable). This is considered to be public information.
5. Schools must provide written notification to the parents of any student who has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a core academic area teacher (including a special educator or SLP providing primary instruction, a supplemental reading teacher, a supplemental math teacher, or an alternative program teacher providing instruction in a core academic area) who is not HQT for his/her assignment. Please note that if your assignment includes the teaching of a variety of courses, a letter need only be sent for that portion of your assignment for which you are not HQT.

If I don't intend to teach under an endorsement, do I need to worry about my HQT status for that endorsement?

No. Your HQT status for an endorsement only matters if you are actually teaching that content area. However, if you think you may return to the teaching of that area in the future, you should probably fulfill whatever outstanding requirements you may have.

I teach physical education (or health education, library media, etc.). Why didn't I get an HQT letter?

The federal HQT requirements pertain only to educators of core academic areas, as defined by NCLBA (see above). For a complete list of endorsements subject to HQT content knowledge requirements, including endorsements reviewed under certain circumstances, see the document *HQT Review Areas by Endorsement Code* online at education.vermont.gov under Educator Licensing.

I teach special education. Will I need to meet HQT requirements?

Yes, if you provide "primary instruction" in English language arts/reading, math, science, or social studies. Refer to the documents *Definitions of Special Education Instructional Arrangements and Their Implications for Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Requirements* and the *HQT Licensure & Content Knowledge Requirements for Special Educator Assignments* online at education.vermont.gov under Educator Licensing for more information.

I provide supplemental reading and/or math reading services. Will I need to meet HQT requirements?

Yes. See the document *HQT Licensure & Content Knowledge Requirements for Providers of Supplemental Reading and/or Math Services* online at education.vermont.gov under Educator Licensing for more information.

I teach in an alternative program. Will I need to meet HQT requirements?

Yes, if you provide instruction in English language arts, math, science, or social studies. See the document *HQT Licensure & Content Knowledge Requirements for Alternative Program Teacher Assignments* online at education.vermont.gov under Educator Licensing for more information.

What endorsements are appropriate for a supplemental reading and/or math assignment or an alternative program assignment?

In order to meet HQT requirements for a Title I or alternative program assignment, an educator must have an appropriate endorsement in addition to meeting content knowledge requirements pertaining to his/her assignment. Endorsement requirements are listed in the *HQT Licensure & Content Knowledge Requirements for Providers of Supplemental Reading and/or Math Services* and the *HQT Licensure & Content Knowledge Requirements for Alternative Program Teacher Assignments* documents. These documents are available online at education.vermont.gov under Educator Licensing.

I teach in a Technical Center. Will I need to meet HQT requirements?

It depends. If you teach a technical education subject such as carpentry, even if embedded academic credit is offered, you do not have to meet HQT requirements at this time. However, if you teach one of the core academic areas, you will need to meet the HQT requirements for classroom teachers. Pre-Tech Exploratory programs are considered alternative programs and, therefore, teachers in these programs will be required to meet the HQT requirements for teachers of alternative programs (see above).

I work in an afterschool or summer program. Do I need to meet HQT requirements?

Core area teachers working in any program supported by Title I funds, including afterschool and summer educational programs (such as 21st Century programs), must meet HQT requirements. For targeted assistance schools, HQT requirements must be met when both the teacher and the program are funded in whole or in part using targeted assistance Title I funds. For schoolwide programs, HQT requirements must be met when the school hosting the program receives schoolwide Title I funds.

If I am "HQT for History Only" or "HQT for Biology Only," what does that mean?

Vermont has generalist secondary social studies and science endorsements that enable the holder to teach all of the social studies or sciences. For this reason, the Department adopted generalist HQT requirements in these two areas. However, it is possible to meet the HQT content knowledge requirements for one or more sub-disciplines without meeting the HQT content knowledge requirements for the generalist science or social studies endorsement. For example, should you receive an "HQT for History Only" HQT determination, you would be considered highly qualified for any social studies assignment in history. However, you would not be considered HQT for any assignment

in geography, civics and government, economics, or general social studies. You may choose to do nothing further if you expect to continue to teach only history. Or you may pursue whatever outstanding requirements you have for the overall HQT in social studies; when these are completed, submit the documentation in order to receive a revised HQT determination.

Also, if your endorsement is limited to a specific subject, then your HQT status is automatically limited to that subject. For example, if you have a 2-13 Science Limited to Physics endorsement, you are only eligible for HQT status for Science Limited to Physics; you would not be eligible for HQT status in biology, chemistry, earth/environmental science, or general science.

Do I need to update my status every year?

No. A determination that you meet the HQT content knowledge requirements for an endorsement remains in effect as long as the endorsement is current.

I am HQT in a core academic area in another state. Can I transfer that HQT status to Vermont?

No. Only Vermont HQT requirements can be applied to Vermont endorsements.

I am a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT). Does that make me HQT?

NBCT is a qualification for HQT as long it's in the same area as your endorsement. If you would like us to review your NBCT status for HQT, please send us a photocopy of your NBCT certificate from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

If I take a course or professional development towards my HQT requirements, how can I have it counted?

In counting coursework for HQT purposes, we count all applicable semester courses clearly in the core academic content areas with a grade of C- or higher. Courses with quarter credits are converted to semester credit equivalents. We also count documented professional development towards HQT requirements when applicable; 15 hours of documented professional development is considered to be the equivalent of 1 semester credit.

To have additional coursework, workshops, or other professional development reviewed for HQT, send in photocopies of transcripts or other documentation that indicate that you have completed any or all outstanding requirements. We do not need official copies of transcripts or grade reports for HQT purposes.

When sending documentation, indicate the name your license is under and your birth date or include a copy of your HQT determination letter so we can easily identify your records. We will review the documentation and issue a new determination letter if your status changes. Documentation can be mailed to:

Vermont Department of Education
Office of Licensing and Professional Standards/HQT
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

Can I get a course pre-approved?

We are working with in-state providers (e.g., the universities, The Vermont Mathematics Initiative, the Regional Educational Service Agencies, etc.) to pre-approve for HQT purposes specific courses they will be providing. However, courses can be taken from any accredited institution. When searching for courses to take, be careful to ensure that the provider is reputable. If it is an online provider, make sure an appropriate regional accrediting body for higher education has accredited the institution offering the course and that you will be provided with a university transcript. Since the number of pedagogy credits that can be counted towards HQT requirements may be limited, also consider whether the course is primarily content or pedagogy.

To confirm that a specific course you would like to take can be counted towards your HQT requirements, send a pre-approval request to DOE-HQT@state.vt.us. Include your name, the endorsement you would like to apply the credits to, the institution, and a course description or a link to the course.

Can I get a workshop or other professional development pre-approved?

Yes. To confirm that professional development can be counted towards your HQT requirements, send a pre-approval request to DOE-HQT@state.vt.us. Include your name, the endorsement you would like to apply the credit equivalents to, the name of the activity, and a description or a link to the activity. To be counted towards HQT, applicable professional development must be documented. Typically, professional development documentation is a certificate of attendance that lists the activity, the number of contact hours, and your name.

Can I take an exam to fulfill the HQT requirements?

Most core academic content area endorsements do have a Praxis II exam option to fulfill the HQT content knowledge requirements for that endorsement. The following chart shows the available Praxis II exams that meet HQT content knowledge requirements in Vermont.

The following Praxis II exam(s):	With passing score(s) of:	Will qualify you as HQT in the following area(s):
Elementary Education (test code 0014 or 5014)	MC 148	Early Childhood (K-3) Elementary Education
English (test codes 0041 or 0042)	MC 172/ES 160	Secondary English
Math (test codes 0061 or 0063)	MC 141/ES 154	Secondary Math
General Science (test codes 0435 or 0433) and An exam in Biology (test codes 0235 or 0233), Chemistry (test codes 0245 or 0242), Physics (test codes 0265 or 0262), or Earth and Space Sciences (test code 0571)*	MC 157/ES 145 and Biology MC 151/ES 150 Chemistry MC 160/ES 150 Physics MC 140/ES 150 Earth/Space Science MC 158	Secondary Science (all areas) (Note: A passing score in a sub-discipline meets the HQT requirements for teaching that sub-discipline.)
Social Studies (test codes 0081 or 0083)	MC 162/ES 165	Secondary Social Studies (all areas)
Middle School English (test code 0049) or English (test codes 0041 or 0042)	MC 154 MC 172/ES 160	Middle Grades English

Middle School Mathematics (test code 0069) or Math (test codes 0061 or 0063)	MC161 MC 141/ES 154	Middle Grades Mathematics
Middle School Science (test code 0439) or General Science only (test codes 0435 or 0433)	MC157 MC 157/ES 145	Middle Grades Science (all areas)
Middle School Social Studies (test code 0089) or Social Studies (test codes 0081 or 0083)	MC165 MC 162/ES 165	Middle Grades Social Studies (all areas)
Art (test code 0131)	ES/CR 148	Art
English as a Second Language (test code 0361)**	MC 149	English as a Second Language
Music (test codes 0113 or 0111)	MC 153/CR 150	Music
Reading Specialist (test code 0300)	MC 550	Reading/English Language Arts
French: World Language (test code 0174 or 5174) or French: Content Knowledge (test code 0173) and French: Productive Language Skills (test code 0171)	MC/CR 162 MC 157/CR 163	Modern and Classical Languages – French
German: World Language (test code 0183 or 5183) or German: Content Knowledge (test code 0181) and German: Productive Language Skills (test code 0182)	MC/CR 163 MC 148/CR 169	Modern and Classical Languages – German
Spanish: World Language (test code 0195 or 5195) or Spanish: Content Knowledge (test code 0191) and Spanish: Productive Language Skills (test code 0192)	MC/CR 168 MC 163/CR 165	Modern and Classical Languages – Spanish
Latin (test code 0600)	MC 580	Modern and Classical Languages – Latin

* Note: The following Praxis II exams are no longer available, but they will count towards the Praxis II science sub-discipline requirement for HQT purposes:

Praxis II Exam:	Passing Score:
Biology (test code 0231)	MC 161
Chemistry (test code 0241)	MC 150
Physics (test code 0261)	MC 133

** Note: The following Praxis II exam is no longer available, but it will count towards the Praxis II English as a Second Language requirement for HQT purposes:

Praxis II Exam:	Passing Score:
English as a Second Language (test code 0571)	MC 570

See education.vermont.gov/new/html/licensing/testing.html for more information about Praxis II testing in Vermont.

What are the highly qualified requirements for paraprofessionals?

For this information, refer to the document *Highly Qualified Paraprofessional Requirements & Frequently Asked Questions* online at education.vermont.gov under Educator Licensing.